

mation to the scientific and technical communities through established channels.

Research grants.—Grants are made to universities, hospitals, research institutes, State and local health departments, private and public nonprofit institutions, and to individuals. These grants support basic and applied research in all facets of occupational health. Grants are administered through the Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health.

3. History

At the turn of the century, the Nation was plagued with many problems brought on by a rapidly expanding industry. Not the least of these was the severe health problem resulting from uncontrolled exposures to toxic materials. Tuberculosis, silicosis, lead poisoning, and many other occupational diseases were an accepted risk of people entering the work force, and constituted a significant proportion of the Nation's morbidity pattern. Recognizing the severity of occupational diseases and the impact that this was having on industry and labor, the Public Health Service, in 1910, organized a small unit to study several acute areas. The first studies were made in the garment industry of New York, where an excessive rate of tuberculosis was known to exist. This study paved the way to the abolition of the sweatshop and resulted in the establishment of the first union health center, which is still active and providing services to the garmentworkers of New York.

Because of the competence that this group had developed in chest diseases, it was logical that their next studies would be devoted to silicosis, which was rampant in the mining and construction industries and other dusty trades. In 1914 the Public Health Service first established an organized activity in occupational health which was designated as the Office of Industrial Hygiene and Sanitation. This unit has been active for the last 50 years; however, it has had several changes in title as well as administrative location within the Public Health Service.

The early work of the program developed the epidemiology technique for the study of occupational diseases in industry. Such studies were carried out in the pottery industry, the brass foundries, glass and chemical industries, steel plants, textile mills, and others. Through the use of this technique, the program developed an international reputation for the study of occupational diseases. The dust studies undertaken between 1914 and 1940 developed the fundamental principles of prevention, which are in use throughout the world, for the prevention of silicosis and the pneumoconioses. Other milestones were established by the Division during its early years. In 1914 the first investigation of radioactive hazards was initiated in the radium dial plants of New Jersey. In 1931 a full-scale study of industrial dermatoses was launched which led to their recognition as a major health problem of industrial workers. Studies of air pollution in such places as Los Angeles, Donorra, New York, and other major metropolitan centers laid the groundwork for the large-scale program of the Public Health Service regarding air pollution, which came into being in 1956.

With the advent of World War II, the occupational health program turned its attention almost completely to war-related activities. It